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French Press Details Soviet Use of Western Data

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PARIS, April 1 — Confidential Soviet documents obtained by French intelligence indicate that Moscow's acquisition of Western technical data has saved the Soviet Union millions of dollars in arms research, according to reports here.

The documents, according to *Le Monde*, were key elements in the French decision two years ago to expel 47 Soviet diplomats accused of espionage. The newspaper said the documents had been obtained by French intelligence inside the Soviet Union and had been used by French officials to substantiate the spying charges in private conversations with the Russians.

The documents, which were described in *Le Monde* today and over the weekend, are from the Soviet Ministry of the Aviation Industry and discuss technical information obtained through "special channels" in the West.

"The positive experience we have had from abroad," one document says, "has allowed us to proceed in a manner favorable to our country in perfecting new, higher-level technology, and this in a very short span of time."

That document, summarizing the record of the Ministry of the Aviation Industry in 1979, says technical information from the West enabled the Russians to bypass research and tests of their own, saving 48.6 million rubles, or roughly \$56.5 million.

The document says the figure represented an increase of 18.8 million rubles, or \$21.8 million, over 1978.

Western diplomats said they believed that the Soviet documents published here, along with photocopies of portions of the Russian originals, were authentic and consistent with what has generally been believed about the Soviet effort to acquire Western technological secrets.

Nonetheless, the documents seemed to provide a rare glimpse into the functioning of the Soviet intelligence-gathering apparatus.

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The information tends to support contentions by the Reagan Administration that spying provides the Russians with a major means of improving military capability. The Administration has urged Western countries to impose tougher controls on high-technology products sold to the Soviet Union.

Embassy Protests Publication

The Soviet Embassy has protested the publication of the documents, asserting that it represented an act of "flagrant disinformation" aimed at "awakening the suspicion of the French who participate in a vast enterprise of scientific and technical cooperation with the Soviet Union."

Western diplomats here speculated that the Soviet documents may have

been disclosed to the local press as a result of a high-level French Government decision to warn the Russians against industrial espionage here.

Another possible explanation offered by officials was that the documents were made public by individuals who wanted to influence the mood of French-Soviet relations.

In any case, information about the expulsion of the Soviet officials abruptly became available here, with French newspapers for the first time publishing a full list of their names and giving in some instances their new positions in the Soviet bureaucracy.

61.5% of Material Is From U.S.

The Soviet documents indicate that 61.5 percent of the material derived from "special channels" came originally from the United States, 10.5 percent from West Germany and 8 percent from France.

In 1979, according to documents of the Ministry of the Aviation Industry, 156 "samples" and 3,896 technical documents were obtained abroad and studied by the ministry.

One of the documents gives two specific examples of the use of technical knowledge gained in the West. In one case, the aiming systems of weapons aboard fighter planes was improved by studying Western mounting procedures. In another, detailed studies of air flow and wind resistance for the SU-25, a Soviet fighter-bomber, were eliminated because Western studies were available to Soviet planners.

"These are leading elements of technology where the Soviets are behind," a Western diplomat said.